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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BASRAH 000066

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SHOOTING AT BASRAH HOSPITAL

REF: BASRAH 000065

CLASSIFIED BY: Ramon Negrón, Director, Regional Embassy Office
Basrah, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: A close REO contact reported a shooting incident involving the director of al-Musawi Hospital in Basrah. The director confronted members of the Iraqi Army (IA) who insisted on bringing weapons into the hospital. The shooter was allegedly a bodyguard of the commander 50th Brigade 14th Division (IA). The commander, who was present during the incident, apparently incited the shooting. The victim received minor wounds and another hospital employee was subsequently arrested after trying to intercede. The GOI has begun an investigation into the incident. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Post interpreter received a call during the evening of 16 July from Abdul Aaly al-Musawi, a prominent cleric, businessman and owner of the al-Musawi Hospital in Basrah. Al-Musawi reported that the Imam of Mirzah Mosque, which is located in the al-Seemir area of Basrah, was taken to al-Musawi Hospital after being shot by unknown gunmen in the city center. (See REFTEL.)

¶3. (C) According to Al-Musawi, the commander of the 50th Brigade, 14th Division (IA), Brigadier General Jiwad al-Muhanah, tried to gain access to the hospital. The general, who was accompanied by two officers and several bodyguards, attempted to gain access to the hospital in order to question the cleric about the shooting. Hospital guards, however, prevented the general and his staff from entering the building with their weapons -- citing Section 440 of the Iraqi Constitution. While most of the bodyguards remained outside, the three officers and one bodyguard forced their way in, still carrying their weapons. Hospital director Haydir Abbass then confronted the group and reiterated that weapons were prohibited. The confrontation became heated until the sole bodyguard discharged his weapon at the floor in front of the manager, apparently as a warning. The bullet ricocheted off the floor, however, and struck the manager in the leg and arm. At that point, hospital receptionist Abd al-Razak Abd al-Kadim moved forward to confront the group. The bodyguard threatened him with the same fate if he continued to move forward and subsequently arrested him.

¶4. (C) Musawi said the operator was subsequently arrested and, "Beaten by members of the 50th Brigade." Hospital director Abbass appears not to have been seriously wounded. Musawi told our interpreter that as a result of the incident he ordered that his hospital be closed. Musawi later reported that the 14th Division Commander Abd al-Aziz called him to apologize for the behavior of his 50th Brigade Commander and that the GOI had begun an investigation into the incident. The receptionist was reportedly released from custody later that evening and the hospital re-opened early July 17.

¶5. (C) Comment: Musawi is well known to the REO and last visited the REO staff only two days earlier. He initially claimed to be reporting this incident to illustrate the absence of rule of law in Basrah. Assuming the incident account is

accurate, Iraqi brigade commander Muhanah would seem to have demonstrated inappropriate behavior that inevitably got out of hand. The GOI reaction to this incident and the subsequent apology from the Division Commander are positive signs that the rule of law is not absent in the city. End Comment.

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